



MOORING WORKING GROUP

Results of Survey #1

August 2026



Presented by:

Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
and

The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Table of Contents

Mooring Work Group Survey #1.....	3
Question #1: Which statement best reflects your view?	4
Question #2: Should private moorings continue to be an allowable use of public inland waters?	4
Question #3: If private moorings are allowed, should the State or municipalities place limits on their number, location, or use to protect Public Trust Rights?.....	5
Question #4: Which types of limits do you believe are appropriate? (Select all that apply)	5
Question #5: Which level of government should have primary responsibility for regulating moorings in Maine?	6
Question #6: In your opinion, which statement best reflects how moorings should be regulated in Maine?	7
Question #7: If responsibility is shared between the State and municipalities, what level of state guidance do you think municipalities should have?	7
Question #8: Should the State establish a uniform framework that municipalities must follow when adopting local mooring ordinances (similar to Maine's Shoreland Zoning program)?.....	8
Question #9: If the State establishes a uniform framework, which topics should be addressed through statewide standards? (Select all that apply).....	9
Question #10: Do you believe there should be limits on the number of moorings allowed on an inland waterbody?	10
Question #11: If limits are established, what factors should be considered when determining the number of moorings allowed on a waterbody? (Select all that apply)	10
Question #12: If mooring space is limited, how much priority should each of the following receive when assigning mooring locations?.....	11
Question #13: If waterfront property owners are allowed to place moorings, should the number permitted be based on the amount of shoreline frontage they own?	12
Question #14: Should there be an established minimum amount of shore frontage to have a mooring?	12
Question #15: Should there be a maximum amount of moorings permitted per a shorefront property owner regardless of the lot size or amount of shore frontage?	13
Question #16: Should non-shorefront property owners be permitted to place moorings on water bodies that have a public boat access site?	13
Question #17: Do you believe permits should be required for any of the following types of moorings?	14
Question #18: If permits are required, which entity should issue them?	14
Question #19: Should permitting requirements differ depending on the type or purpose of the mooring?....	15
Question #20: Which types of moorings should have different permitting requirements? (Select all that apply)	15

Question #21: If you think some types of moorings should have different permitting requirements which of the following should be required? (Select all that apply).....	16
Question #22: Which factors should be considered when reviewing a mooring permit application? (Select all that apply).....	17
Question #23: Should exceptions to standard permitting requirements be allowed?	17
Question #24: If exceptions are allowed, for which circumstances? (Select all that apply)	18
Question #25: If permits are required, should applicants pay fees to cover the cost of administering the permitting program?	18
Question #26: Should designated areas of a waterbody be reserved or managed for different types of mooring uses (for example, residential, commercial, or public use) where appropriate?	19
Question #27: Do you believe mooring fields should be allowed on Maine's inland waters?.....	19
Question #28: Under what circumstances should a mooring field be allowed? (Select all that apply).....	20
Question #29: Who should have authority to approve a mooring field?.....	21
Question #30: Do you believe the anchoring of vessels or other floating objects on inland waters should be regulated?	21
Question #31: If anchoring is regulated, which of the following should be subject to regulation? (Select all that apply).....	22
Question #32: Who should have primary authority to regulate anchoring on inland waters?	22
Question #33: Do you have other comments you would like to add?	23

Mooring Work Group Survey #1

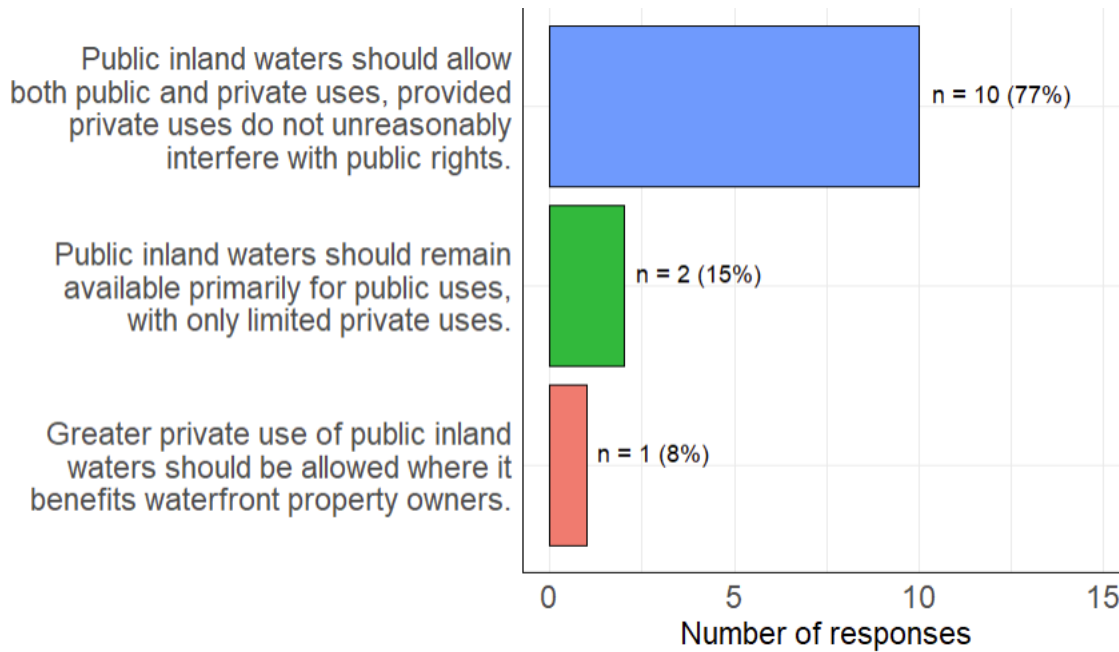
The staff from both Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Agriculture Conservation and Forestry who were members of the Mooring Working Group with help of a person trained in surveys to distribute an online survey to 14 voting members of the Mooring Working Group between July 23rd and July 30, 2026, regarding the placement, regulation, and management of moorings and anchored objects on Maine's inland waters. The survey had 33 questions, most of which were multiple-choice, but the last question provided the opportunity for members to express their feelings in a free-text format.

Respondents expressed broad support for limiting how all moorings are used on Maine's inland waters. Those limits included protection of navigation, environmental resources, and public trust rights. They favored municipal or shared regulation supported by state guidance but not a mandatory statewide framework. Respondents agreed that decisions about the number of moorings allowed in an inland waterbody should consider the size, public access needs, environmental factors, and shoreline frontage. They broadly supported the requirement of permits and fees for placing moorings. Most also supported regulating anchoring but again preferring shared authority.

The next sections show the questions and graphed answers.

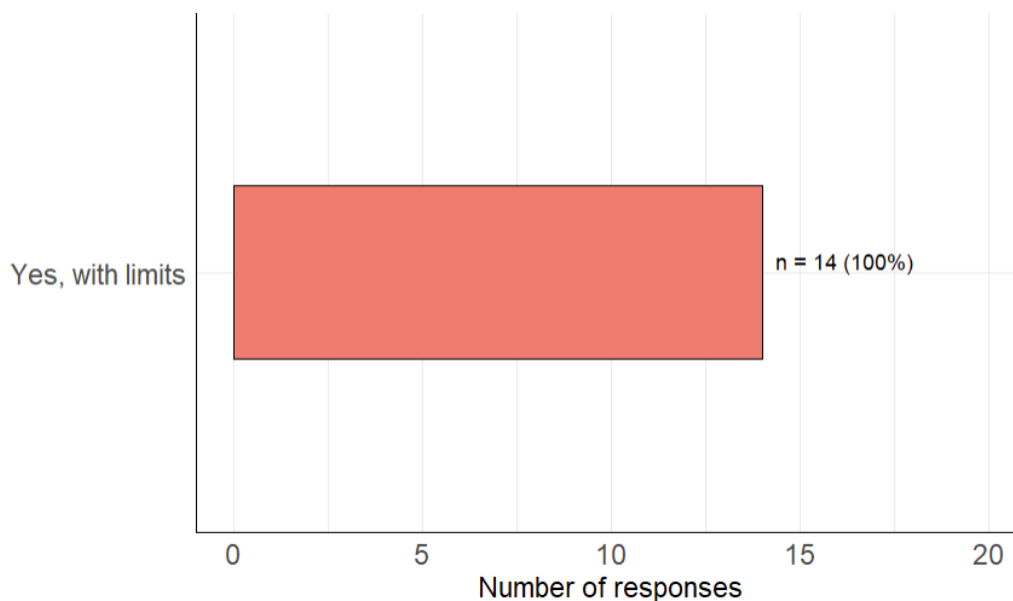
Question #1: Which statement best reflects your view?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.



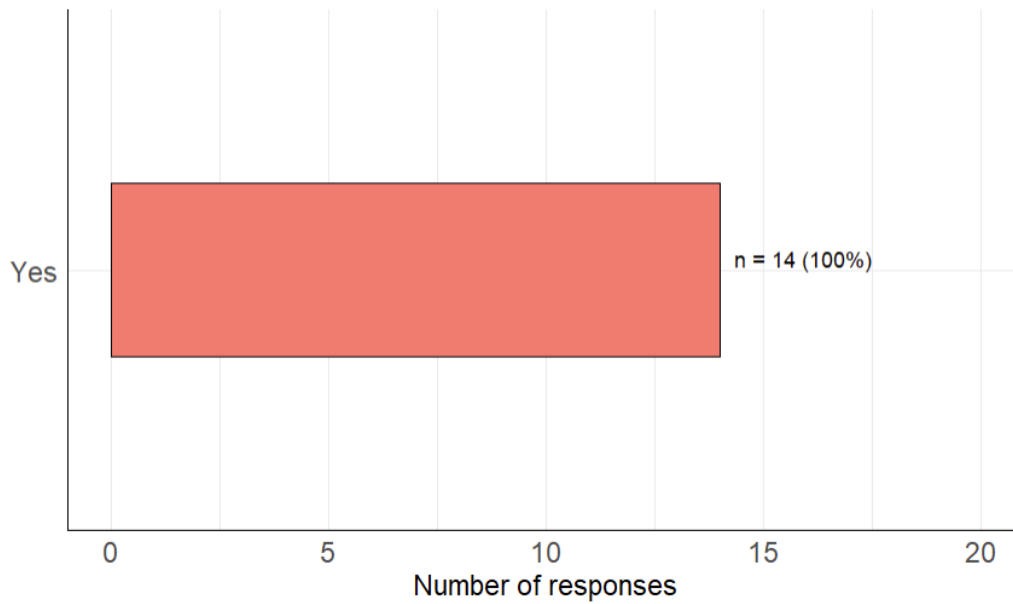
Question #2: Should private moorings continue to be an allowable use of public inland waters?

14 out of 14 responded to this question.



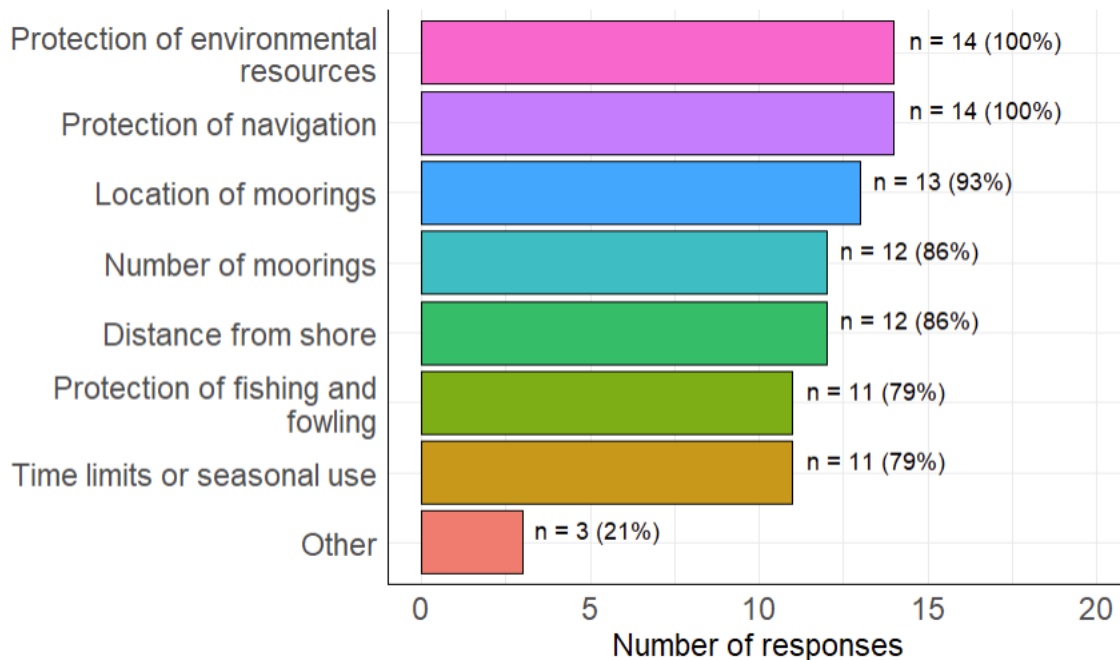
Question #3: If private moorings are allowed, should the State or municipalities place limits on their number, location, or use to protect Public Trust Rights?

14 out of 14 responded to this question.



Question #4: Which types of limits do you believe are appropriate? (Select all that apply)

14 out of 14 responded to this question.

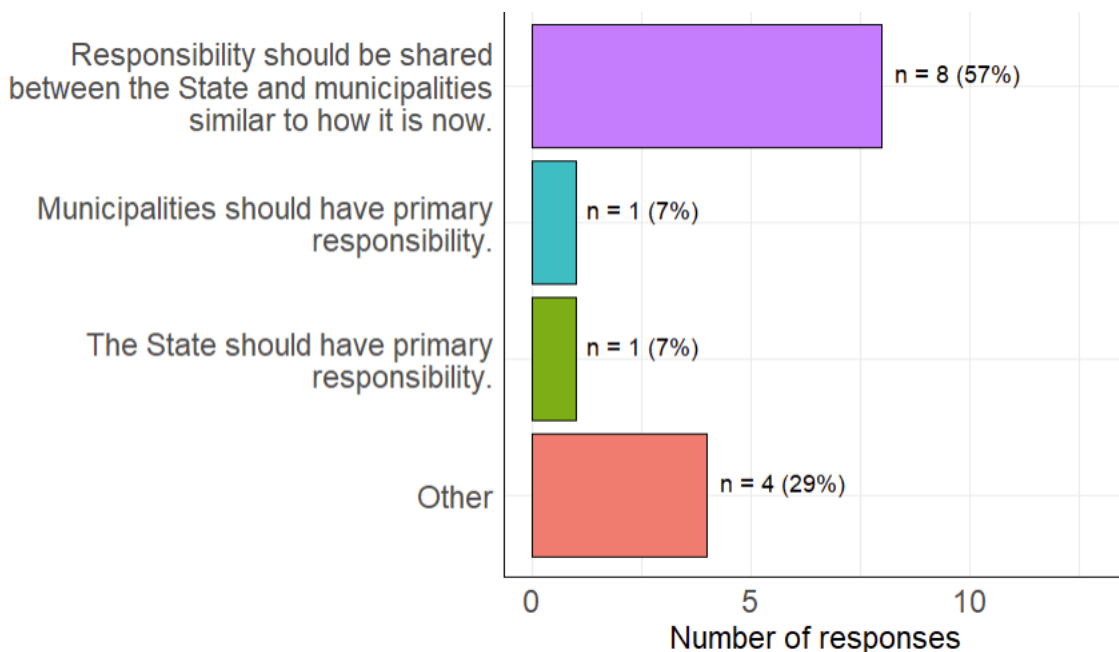


Other:

1	standard tackle requirements beyond the ball in state law
2	Limited New Commercial uses
3	Proximity to invasive species is a huge concern. Sebago has a mooring field in an area of invasives and getting plants out of mooring hardware is almost impossible.

Question #5: Which level of government should have primary responsibility for regulating moorings in Maine?

14 out of 14 responded to this question.

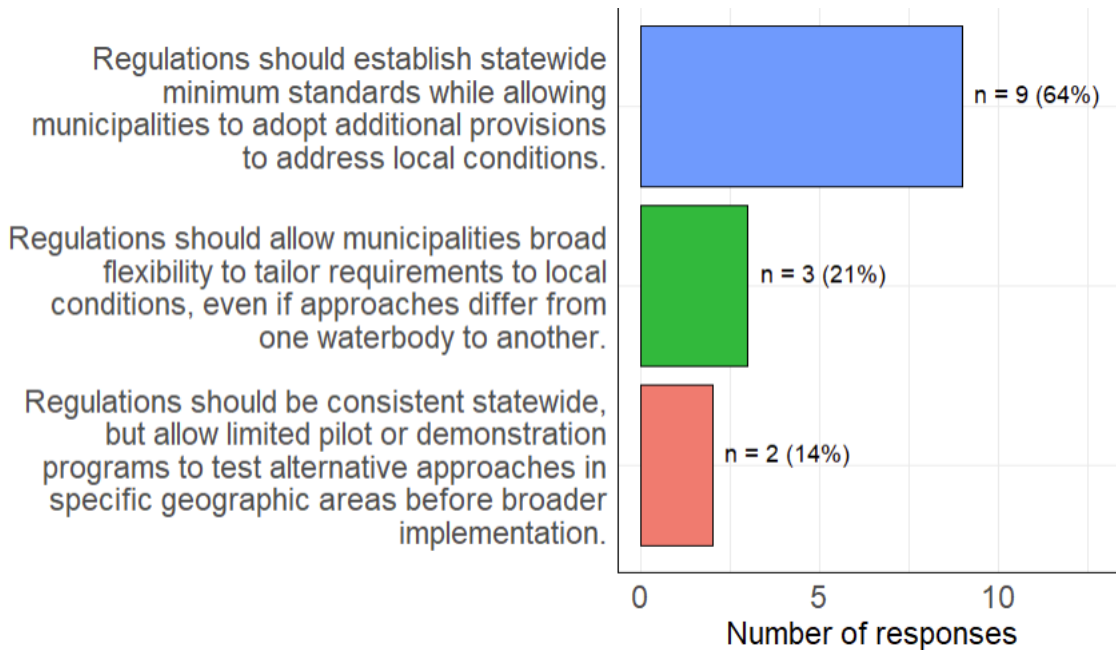


Other:

1	Towns would be required to have a harbor master
2	Municipality should have primary responsibility. On inland waters with no municipal authority then the State would have responsibility.
3	We must have a standard baseline that works just as the current zoning law currently operates. Municipalities may adopt stricter rule but the state law cannot be subject to municipal authority.
4	shared responsibility; LUPC fills the role of a municipality in the unorganized territories.

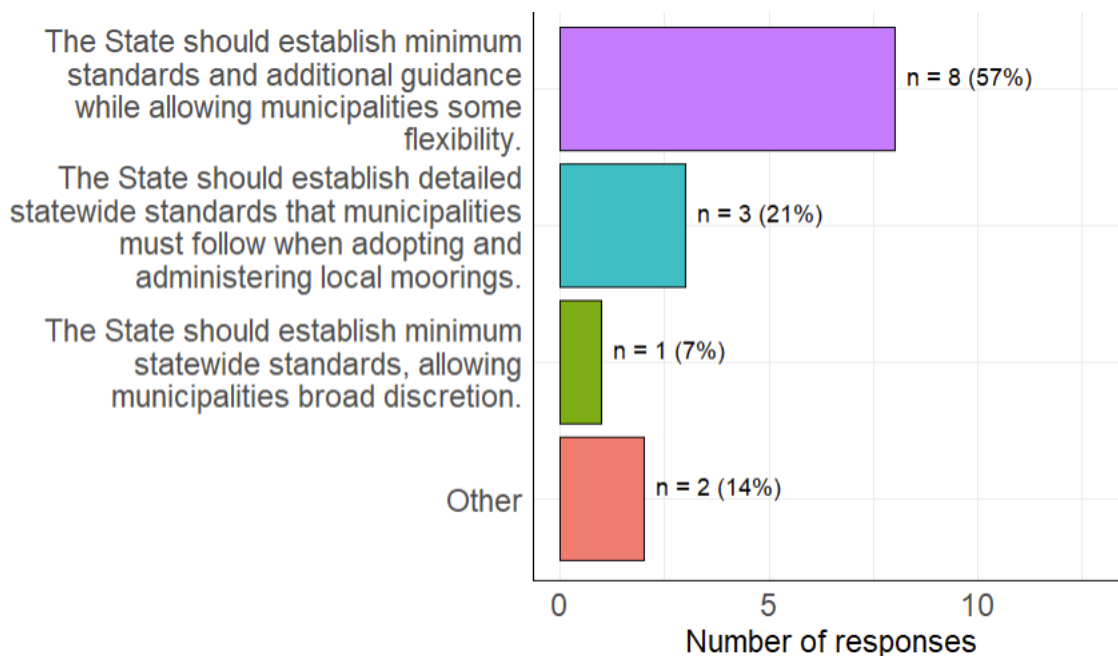
Question #6: In your opinion, which statement best reflects how moorings should be regulated in Maine?

14 out of 14 responded to this question.



Question #7: If responsibility is shared between the State and municipalities, what level of state guidance do you think municipalities should have?

14 out of 14 responded to this question.

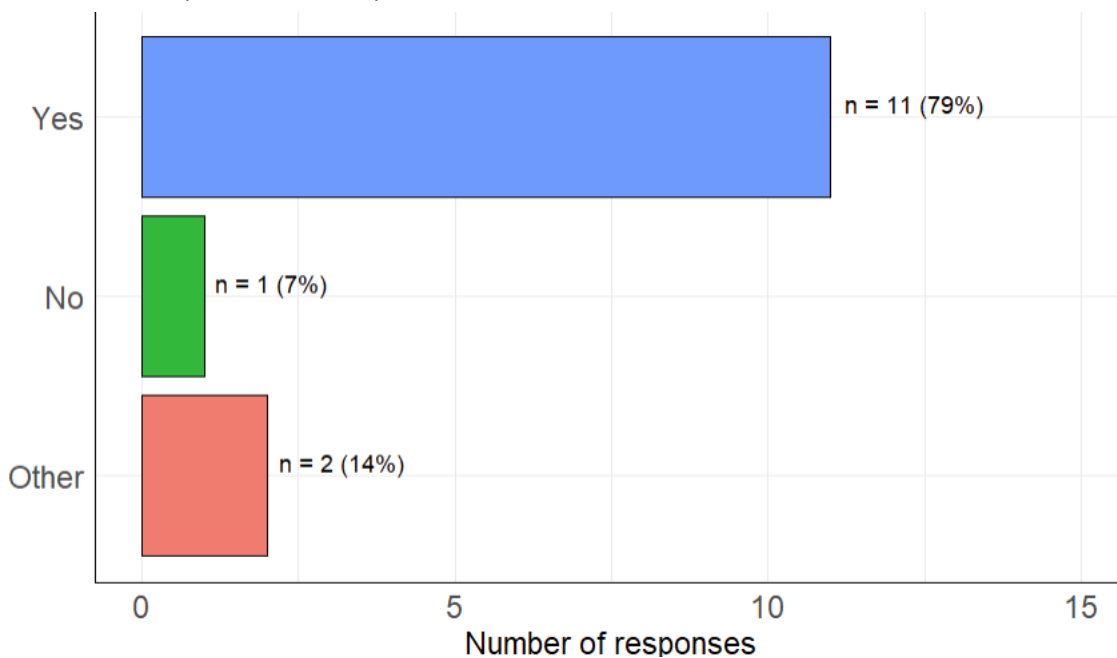


Other:

1	I would combine the first and second options. Minimum standards should be established by the state with municipal board discretion, however, this must be coupled with state-level technical assistance. It could make sense to talk to municipalities to find out what they would like to achieve and help craft the policies that yield the intended outcomes.
2	The state should follow Title 38 and make it the same for both inland and coastal waters. With municipalities governing registrations, inspections, placement and proof of insurance. Inspections should be done visually every year, and diver inspected every five years. Private residents should not be allowed to rent dock space or moorings as it constitutes a commercial use and conflicts with access rules by creating a public right of way. Public launch ramps are already overburdened and should be for people trailering boats. Parking should only be for vehicles with trailers or boat racks. No moorings or mooring parking should be allowed at launch areas as it would restrict public access.

Question #8: Should the State establish a uniform framework that municipalities must follow when adopting local mooring ordinances (similar to Maine's Shoreland Zoning program)?

14 out of 14 responded to this question.

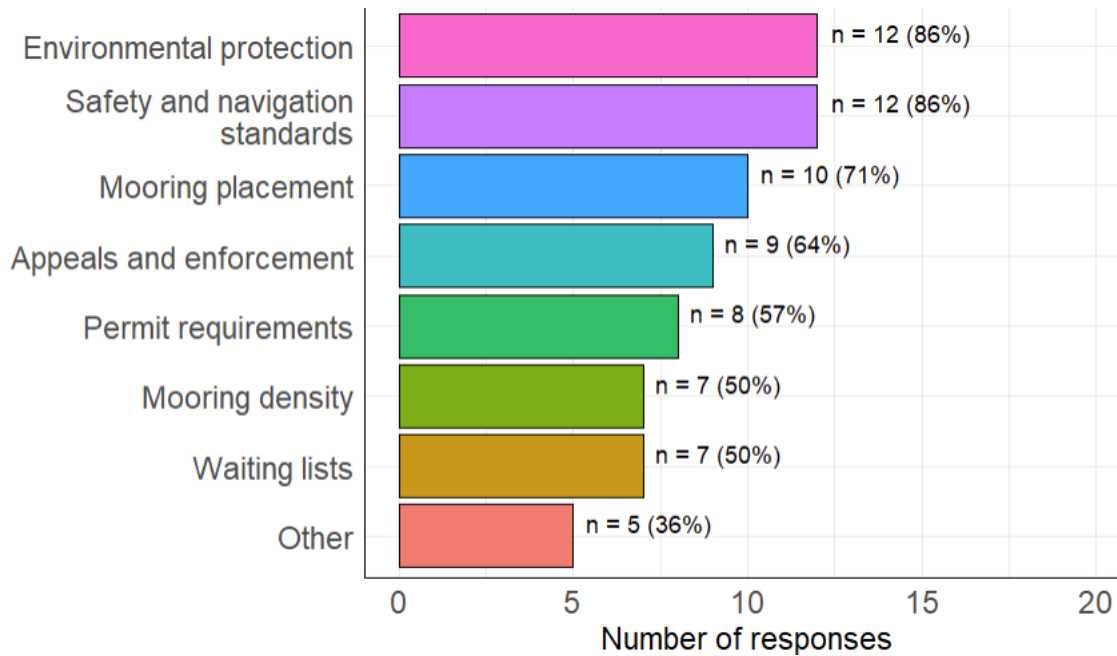


Other:

1	I agree with uniform framework, however I feel with the number of municipalities currently in play some standards may be more restrictive in some cases then the state framework. I think if you want a/the municipality to participate in a rule or law change then they should have the ability to adopt their own ordinance accordingly. With the help of State of Maine guidance if needed.
2	As long as it gives municipalities the ability to identify mooring fields or adjust water body size, depths and density/population

Question #9: If the State establishes a uniform framework, which topics should be addressed through statewide standards? (Select all that apply)

14 out of 14 responded to this question.

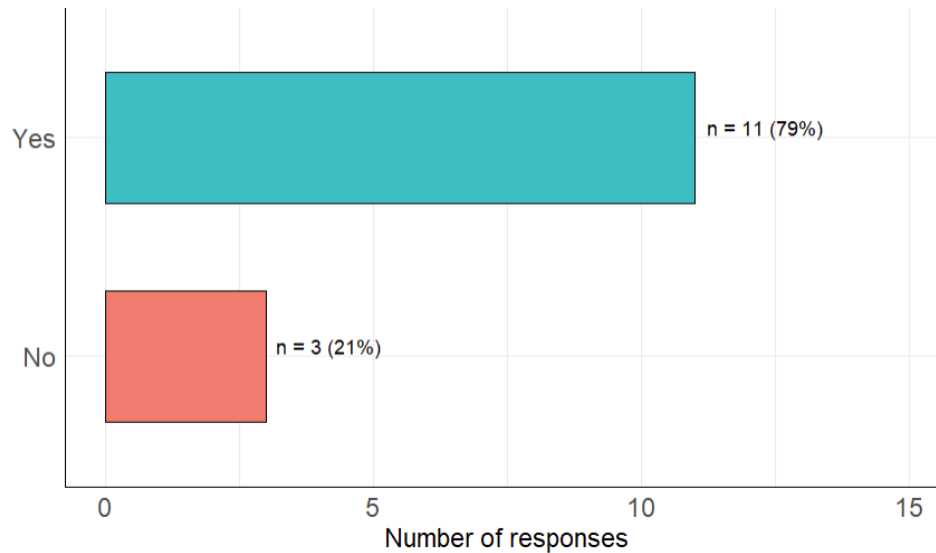


Other:

1	Fees, harbor master requirements
2	If a uniform standard is drafted then all of these topics would need to be addressed. Again, for those municipalities who already have strong ordinances in play a uniform standard may inhibit or contradict a more stringent rule.
3	We do not support the implementation of a uniformed framework.
4	the unchecked uses should be left up to the local authority (municipal).
5	No known invasive plants in vicinity

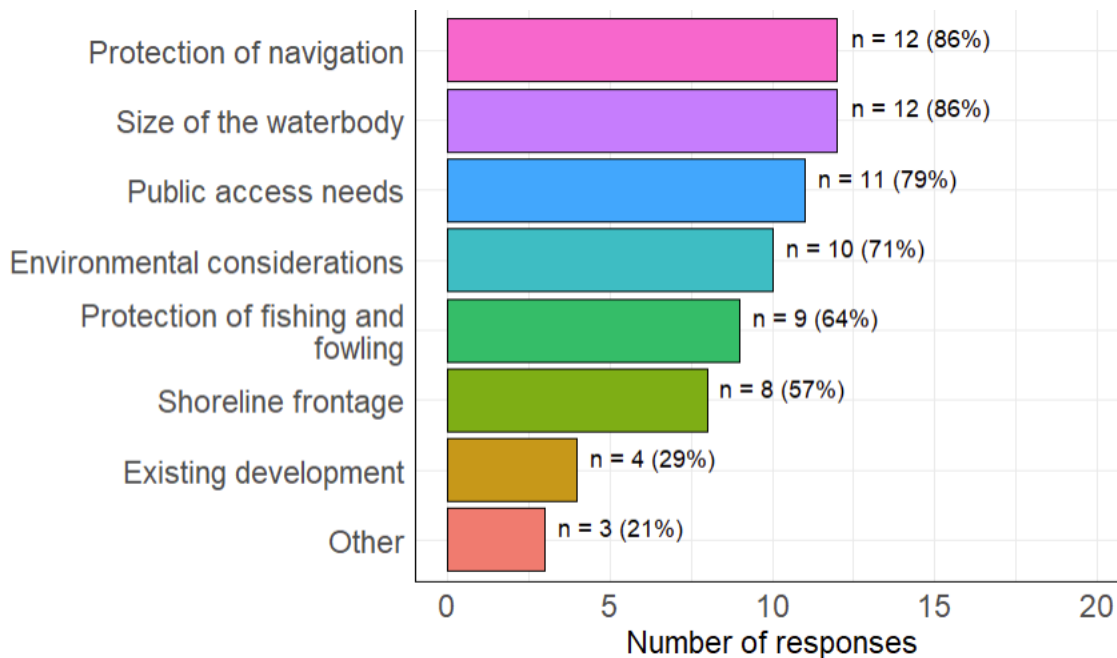
Question #10: Do you believe there should be limits on the number of moorings allowed on an inland waterbody?

14 out of 14 responded to this question.



Question #11: If limits are established, what factors should be considered when determining the number of moorings allowed on a waterbody? (Select all that apply)

14 out of 14 responded to this question.

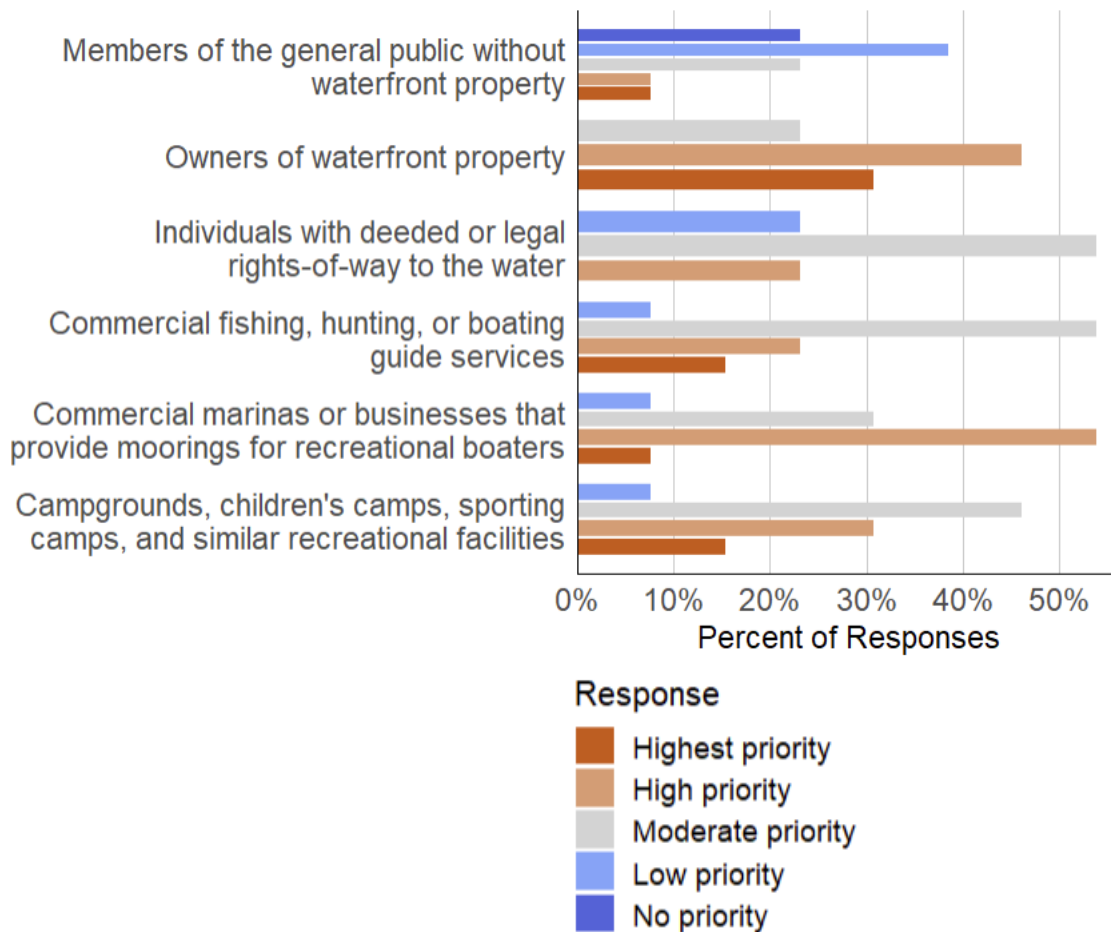


Other:

1	The criteria used to determine limits should be directly related to the intended outcome. One size will not fit all, or most for that matter since factors will change between each waterbody.
2	Lake management class could be a factor. however, limiting the number of moorings on a waterbody creates its own issues and complications and doesn't directly address the primary issues. Leave as an option for a municipal ordinance perhaps, but this should not be regulated statewide.
3	Certain areas present a problem if moorings are too close and it becomes a safety issue.

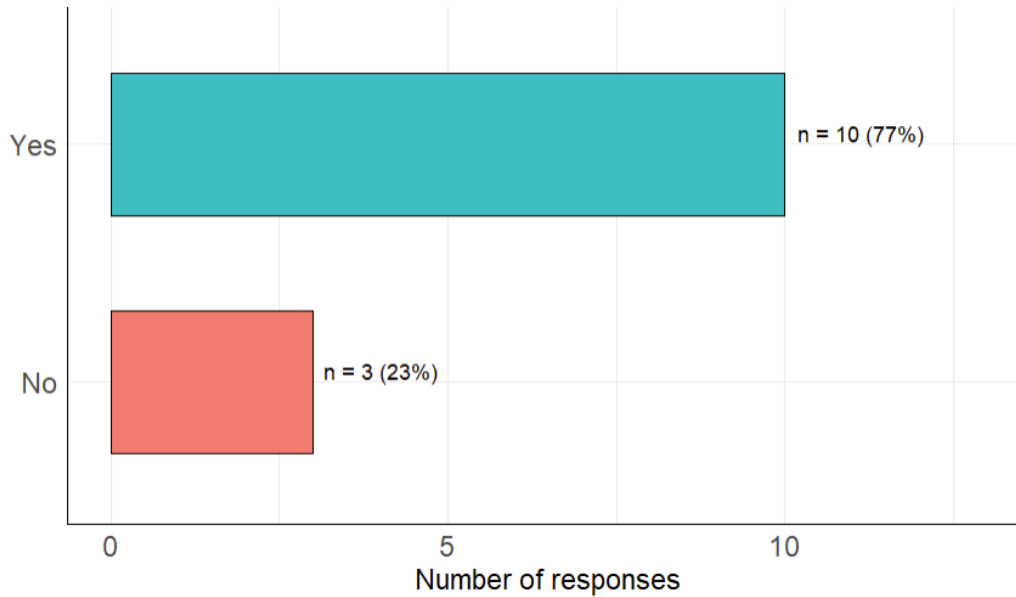
Question #12: If mooring space is limited, how much priority should each of the following receive when assigning mooring locations?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.



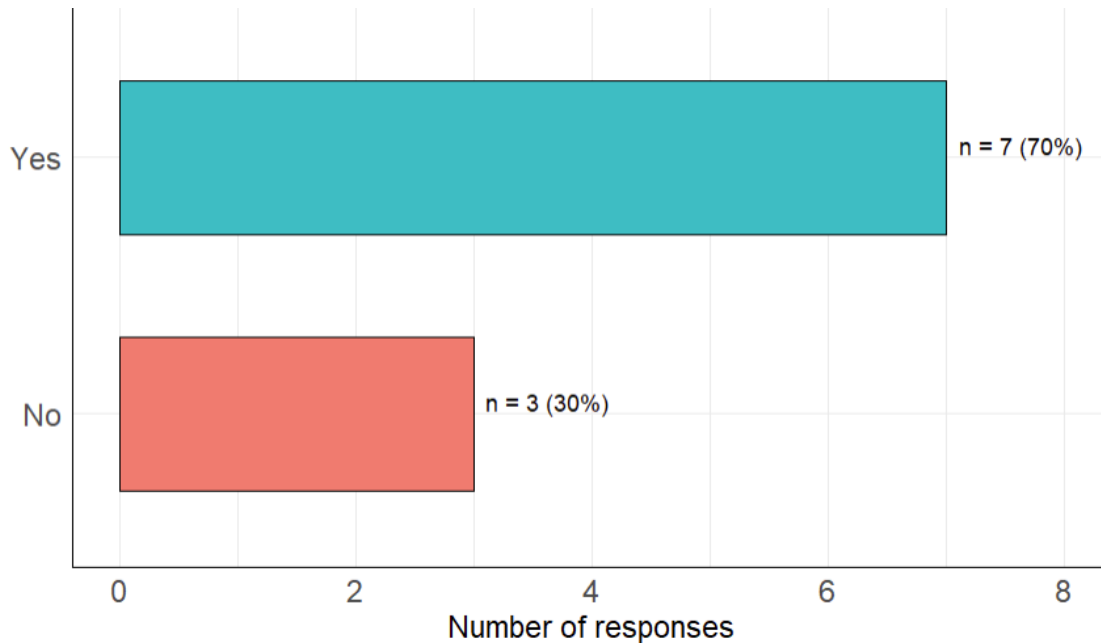
Question #13: If waterfront property owners are allowed to place moorings, should the number permitted be based on the amount of shoreline frontage they own?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.



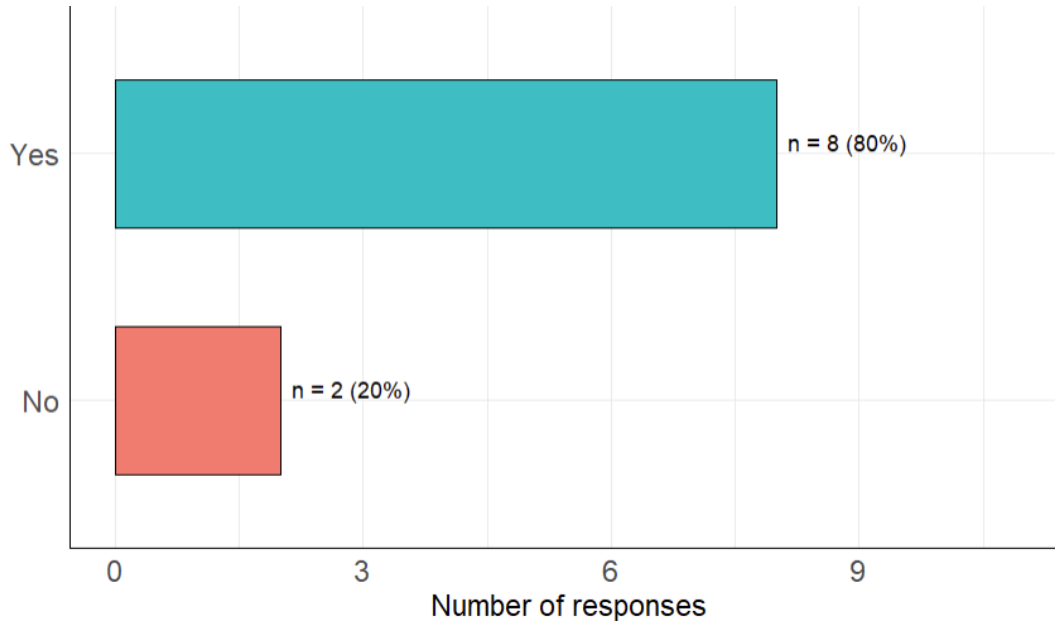
Question #14: Should there be an established minimum amount of shore frontage to have a mooring?

Only the 10 who responded "Yes" to question #13 received this question. All 10 responded to this question.



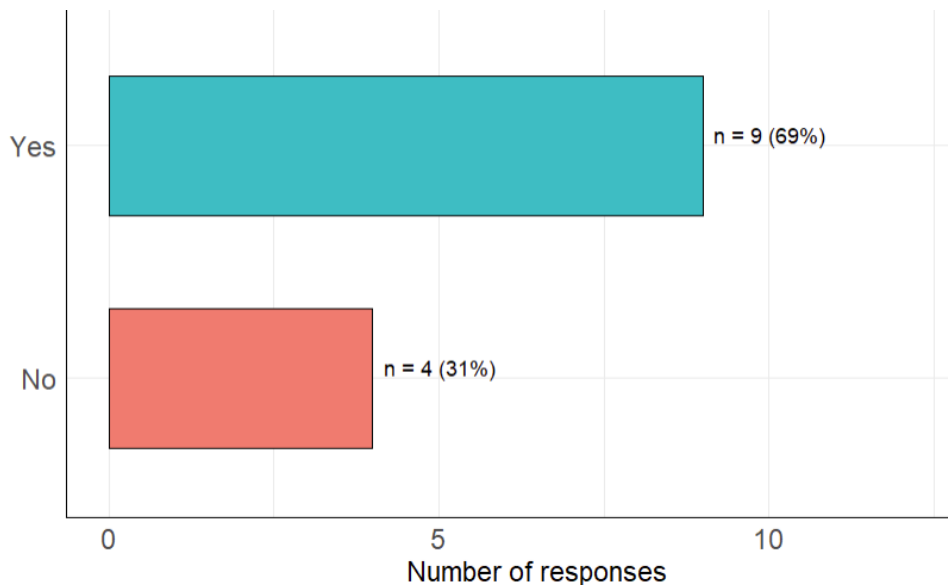
Question #15: Should there be a maximum amount of moorings permitted per a shorefront property owner regardless of the lot size or amount of shore frontage?

Only the 10 who responded “Yes” to question #13 received this question. All 10 responded to this question.



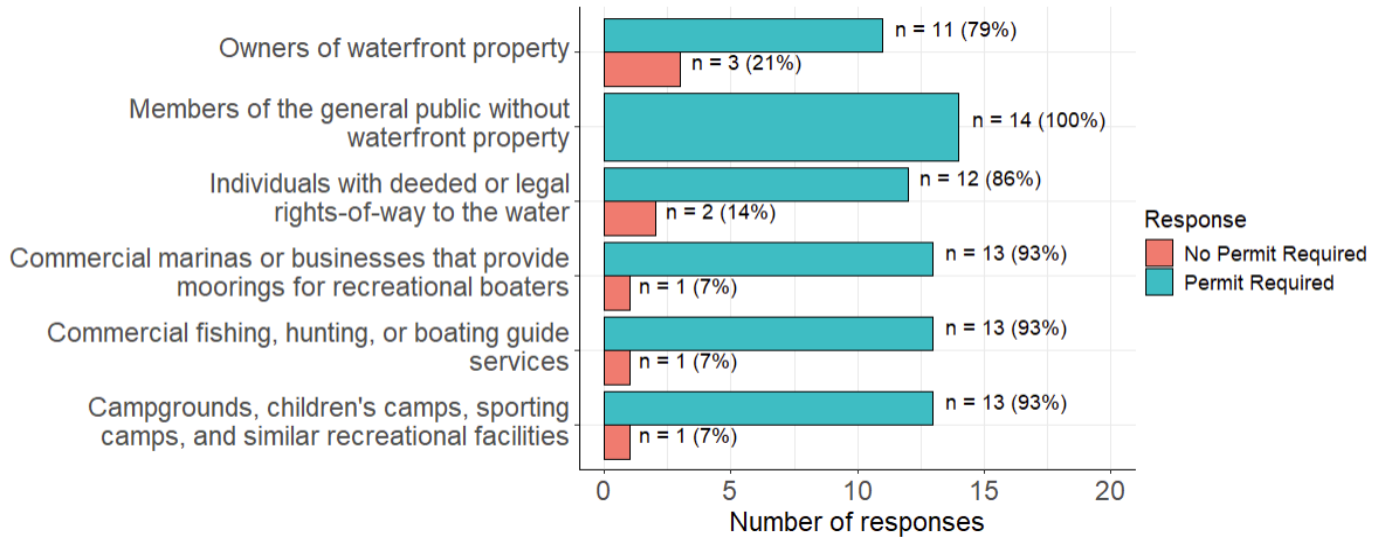
Question #16: Should non-shorefront property owners be permitted to place moorings on water bodies that have a public boat access site?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.



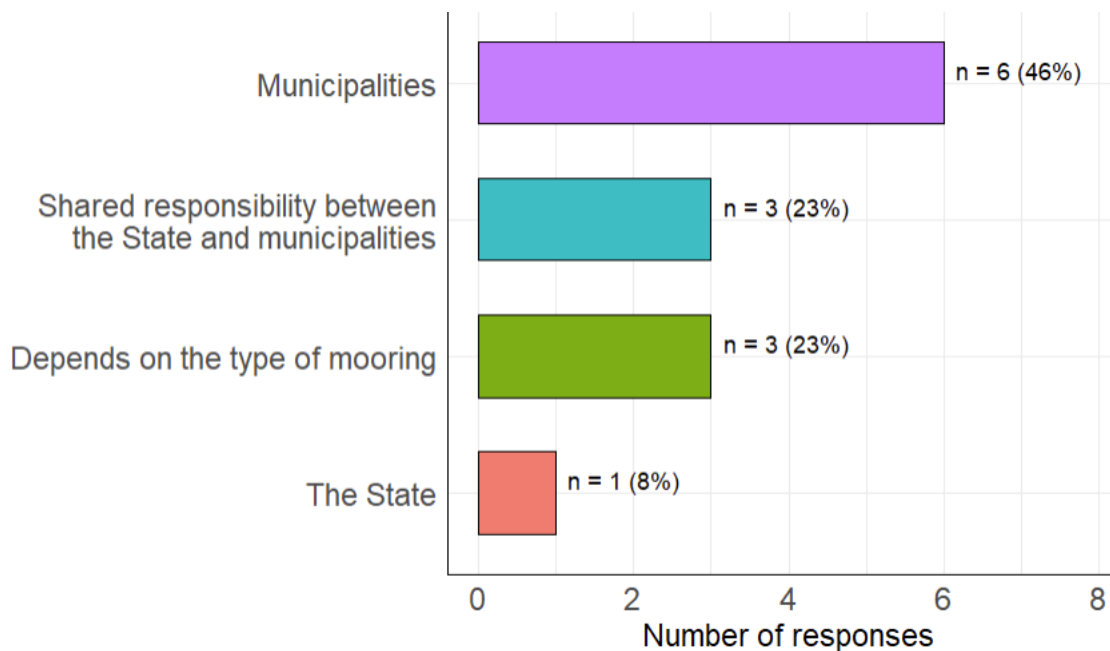
Question #17: Do you believe permits should be required for any of the following types of moorings?

14 out of 14 responded to this question.



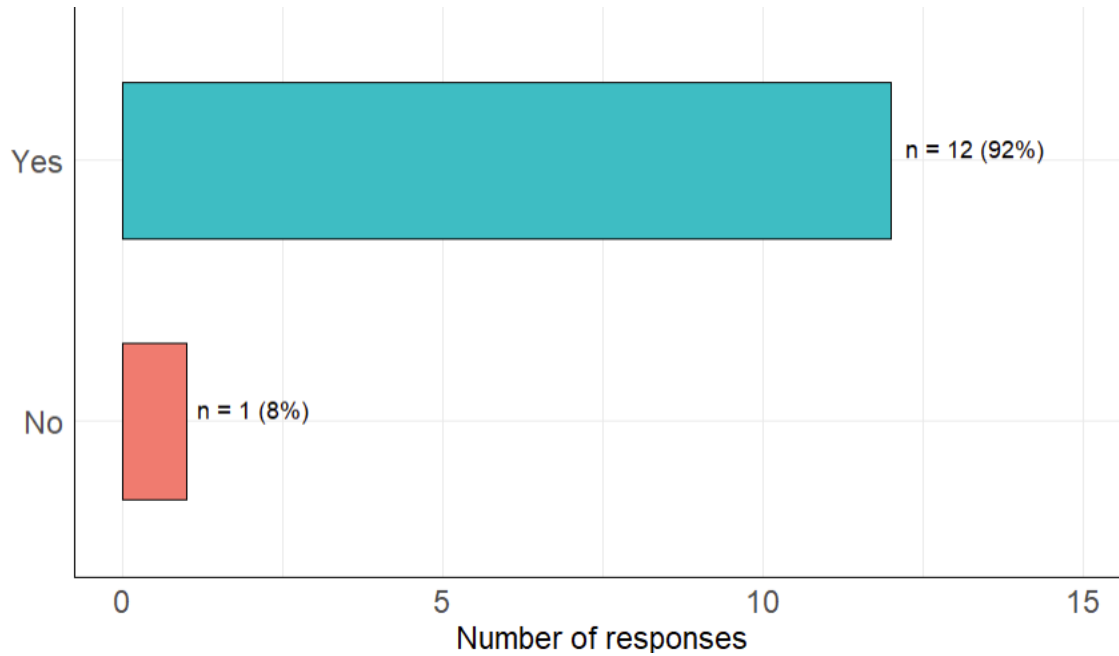
Question #18: If permits are required, which entity should issue them?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.

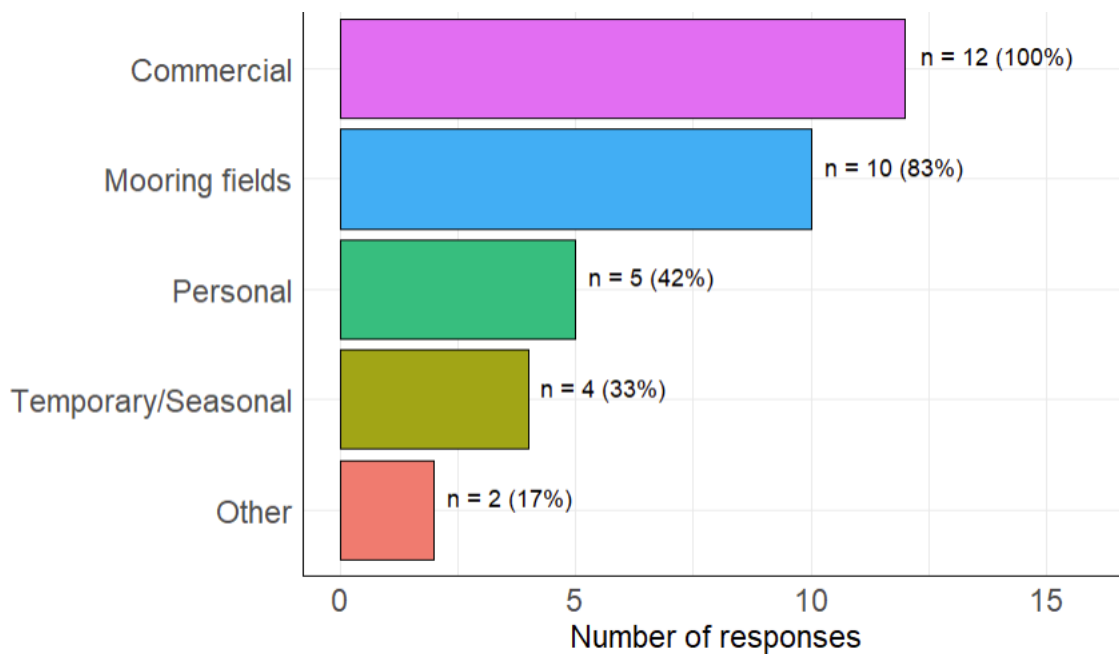


Question #19: Should permitting requirements differ depending on the type or purpose of the mooring?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.

**Question #20: Which types of moorings should have different permitting requirements? (Select all that apply)**

Only the 12 who responded “Yes” to question #19 received this question. All 12 responded to this question.

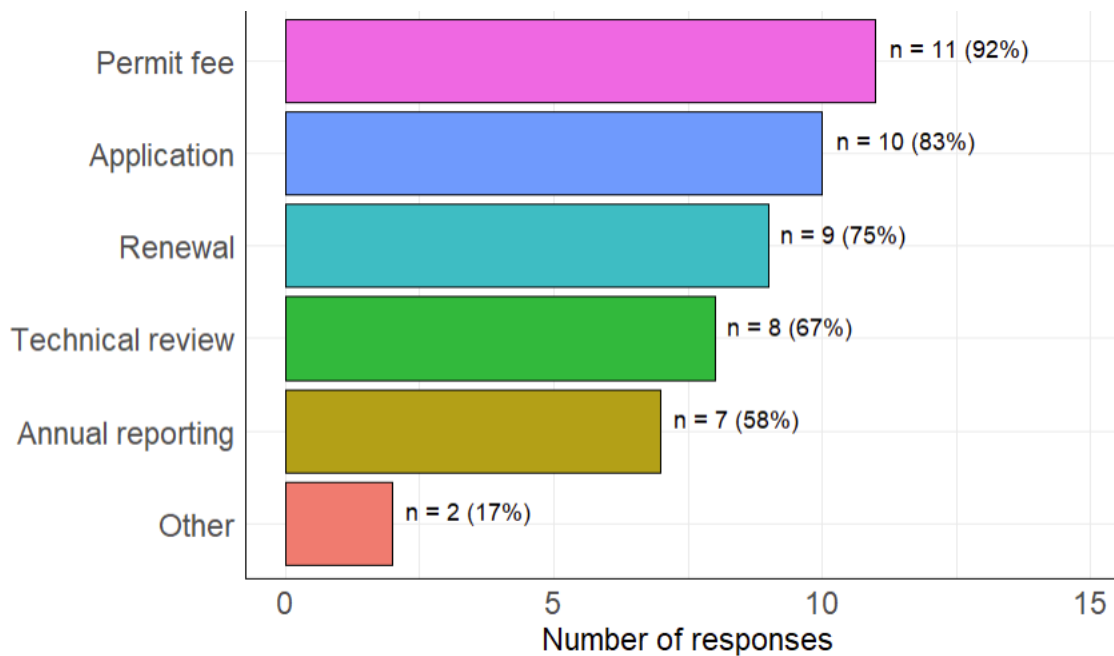


Other:

1	private property ownership should not be allowed to provide access to the water for a fee and should not be allowed to provide access without designated off street parking
2	moorings for navigational/safety purposes. All of these types should probably be subject to separate regulation standards/conditions of approval, not necessarily separate permitting requirements/processes.

Question #21: If you think some types of moorings should have different permitting requirements which of the following should be required? (Select all that apply)

Only the 12 who responded “Yes” to question #19 received this question. All 12 responded to this question.

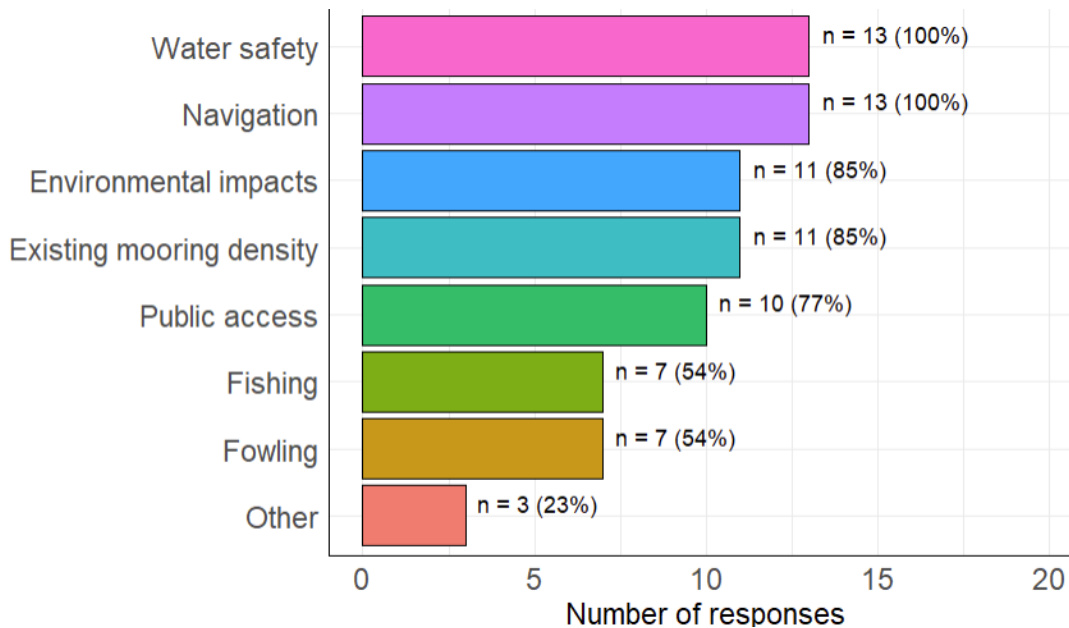


Other:

1	This level of overview risks putting an undue burden on towns without the capacity to administer and enforce multiple types of mooring permits. This decision should be left to each municipality to make according to their own capacity and needs.
2	Inspection and insurance

Question #22: Which factors should be considered when reviewing a mooring permit application? (Select all that apply)

13 out of 14 responded to this question.

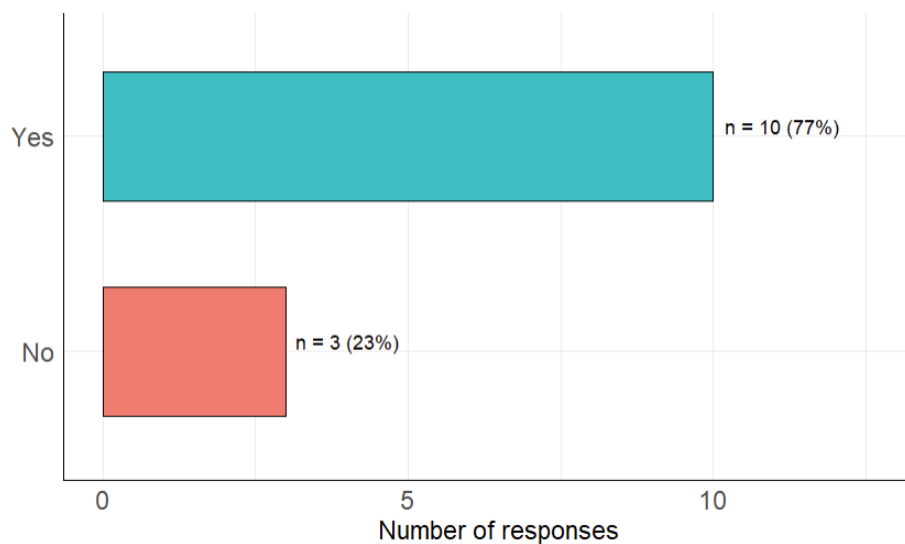


Other:

1	Keep statewide requirements minimal, allow municipalities to expand according to their individual challenges and interests.
2	Presence of Invasive Species
3	Clear channels for access to private properties and commercial establishments

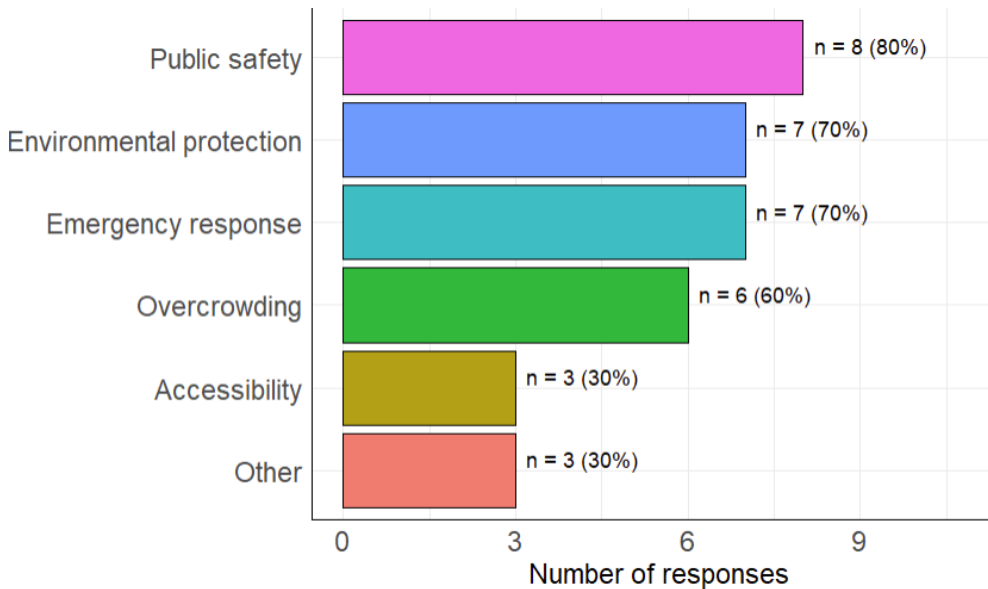
Question #23: Should exceptions to standard permitting requirements be allowed?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.



Question #24: If exceptions are allowed, for which circumstances? (Select all that apply)

Only the 10 who responded “Yes” to question #23 received this question. All 10 responded to this question.

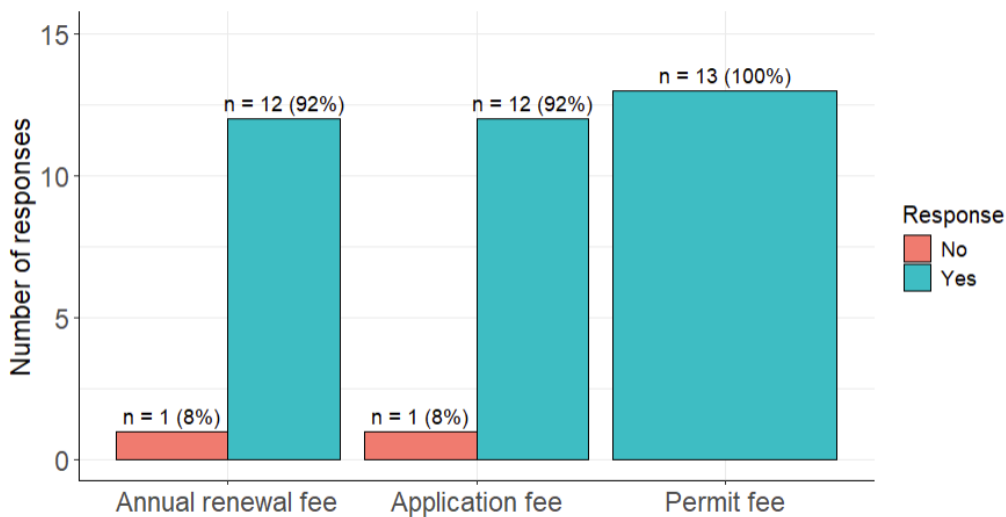


Other:

1	water depth, invasive plants
2	Weather related uses only
3	municipalities can allow exemptions for their own ordinances where they don't conflict with statewide regs

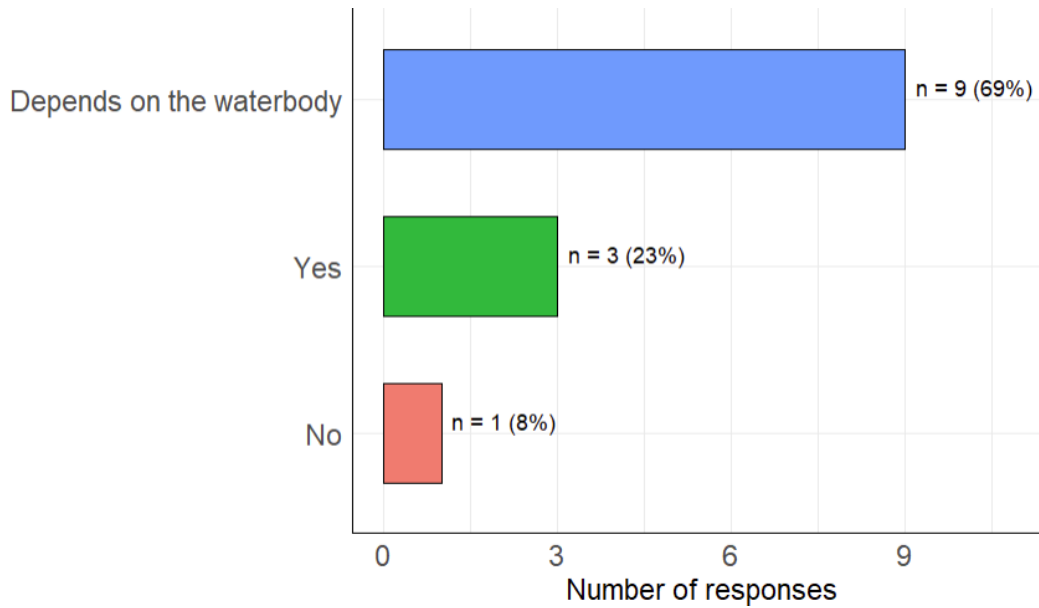
Question #25: If permits are required, should applicants pay fees to cover the cost of administering the permitting program?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.



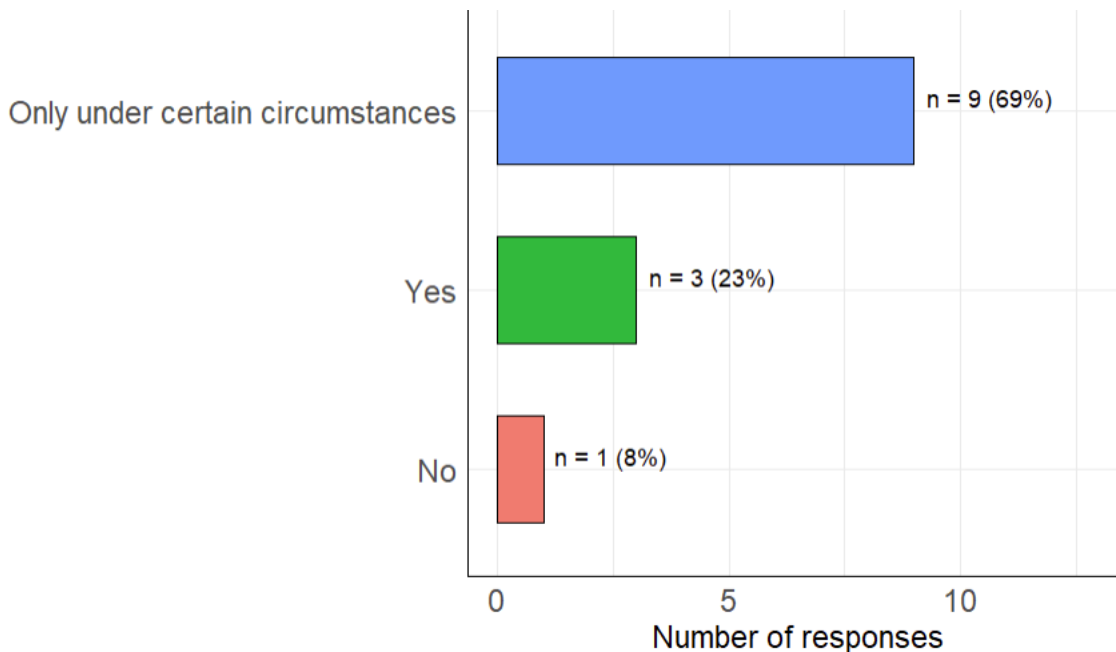
Question #26: Should designated areas of a waterbody be reserved or managed for different types of mooring uses (for example, residential, commercial, or public use) where appropriate?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.



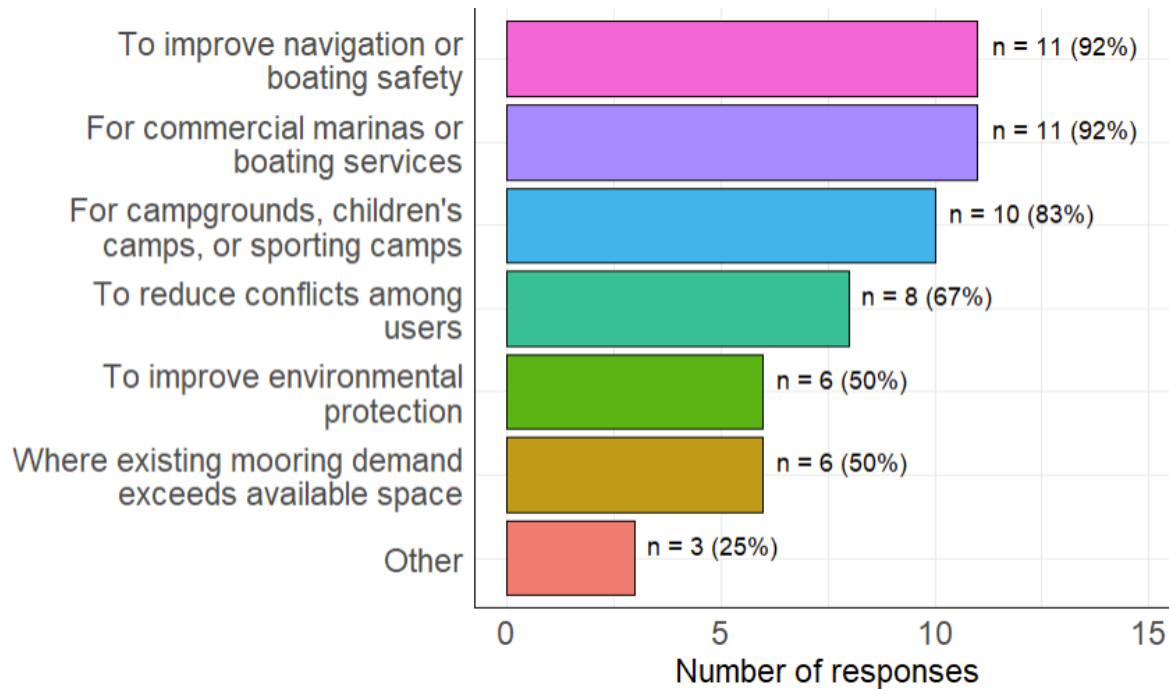
Question #27: Do you believe mooring fields should be allowed on Maine's inland waters?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.



Question #28: Under what circumstances should a mooring field be allowed? (Select all that apply)

Only the 12 who responded “Yes” or “Only under certain circumstances” to question #27 received this question. All 12 responded to this question.

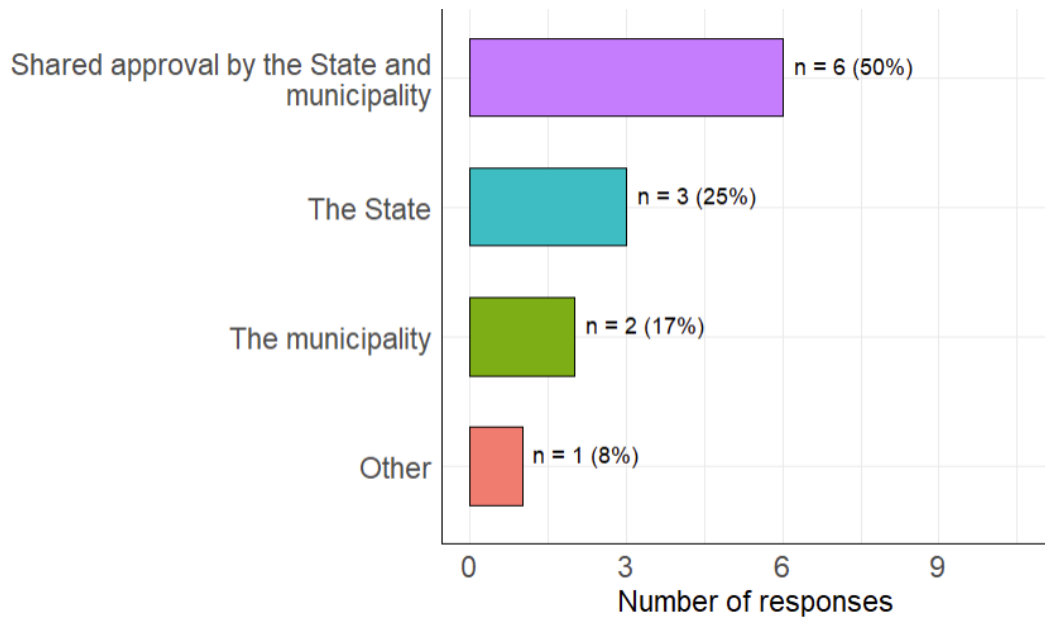


Other:

1	I believe existing commercial mooring field should allowed but should not be permitted to expand. No new commercial mooring fields should be permitted
2	to protect deeded access (eg subdivision backlots with waterbody access)
3	Large bodies of water, areas with back lots, shallow depths and to avoid moorings being too close to shore.

Question #29: Who should have authority to approve a mooring field?

Only the 12 who responded “Yes” or “Only under certain circumstances” to question #27 received this question. All 12 responded to this question.

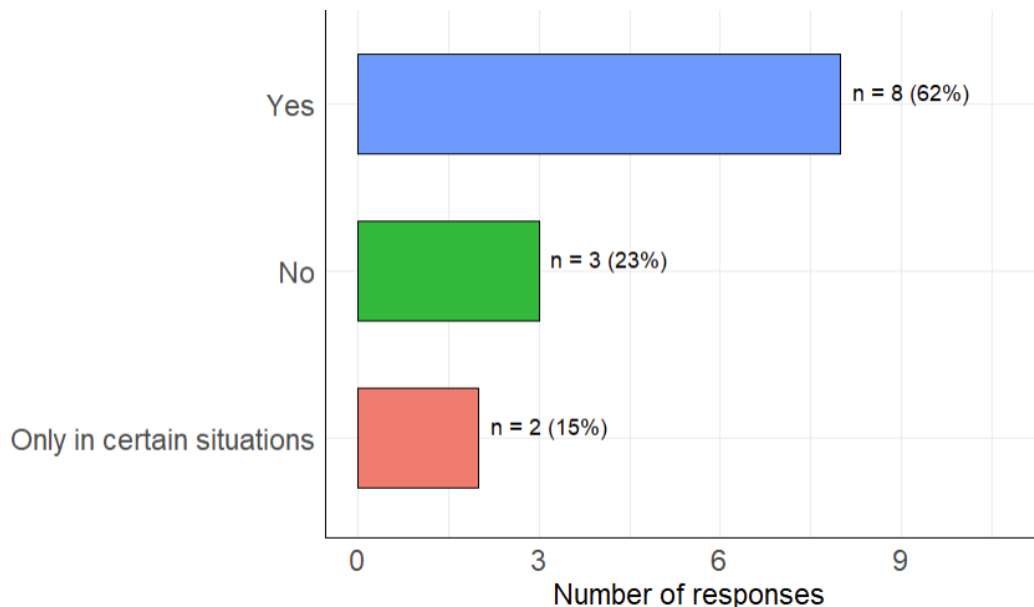


Other:

1	municipalities and LUPC
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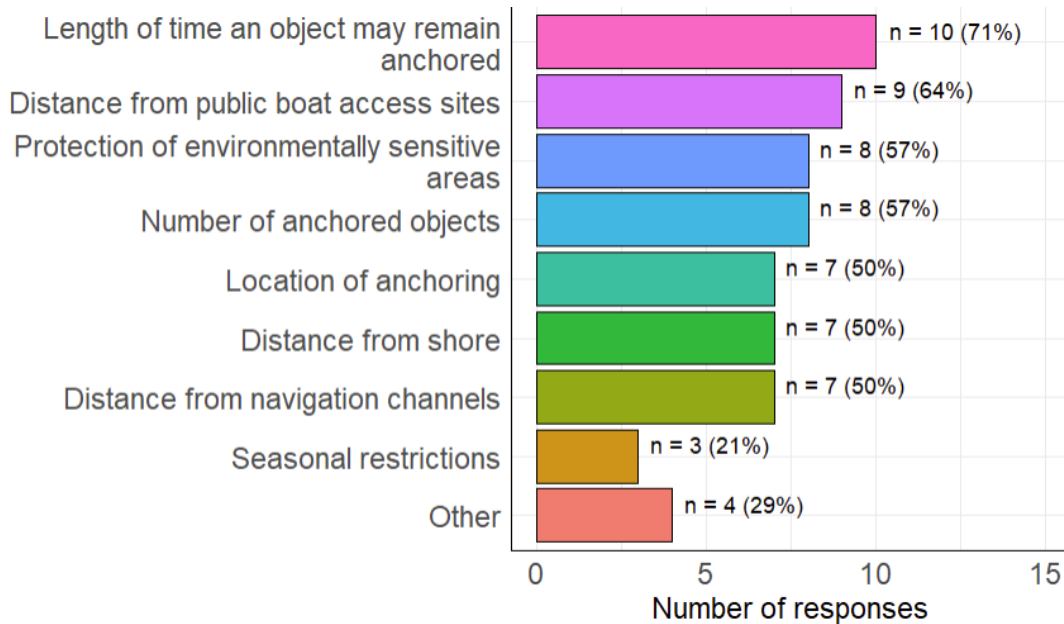
Question #30: Do you believe the anchoring of vessels or other floating objects on inland waters should be regulated?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.



Question #31: If anchoring is regulated, which of the following should be subject to regulation? (Select all that apply)

14 out of 14 responded to this question.

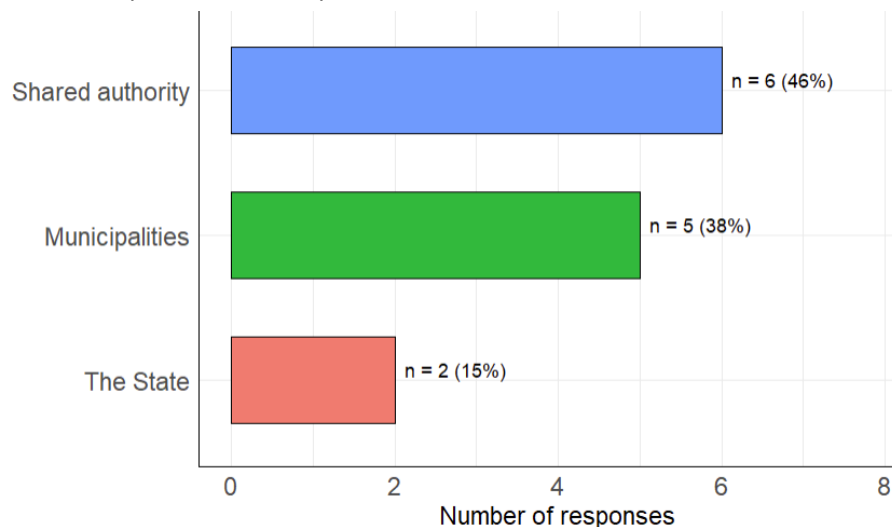


Other:

1	anchoring is an incidental use
2	Mandatory Notification to the Harbor Master
3	Time seems to be a good regulatory tool but there could be other regulatory needs depending on the waterbody.
4	municipal discretion only

Question #32: Who should have primary authority to regulate anchoring on inland waters?

13 out of 14 responded to this question.



Question #33: Do you have other comments you would like to add?

11 (78%) participants responded to this question. The answers were not edited in any way. Below are the responses.

1	The vital element to all of this is to make towns have a harbor master under statue and train and certify the HM so they are instrumental from the beginning and have them be involved in crafting the ordinance and mooring fields.
2	I look forward to discussing this at our next meeting. I'm sure my limited experience, compared to most of the committee, means I will likely change my mind on some of these. For instance, does a lakefront property owner need a permit? How do we ensure the health and beauty of our inland waters, while preserving access to them in the face of increasing demand. Good job putting this questionnaire together.
3	These are great questions and will hopefully elicit some good ideas and suggestions on how to move forward.
4	The establishment of any mooring field should be a deliberative process that includes property owners. Mooring fields associated with marinas should be in front of their own frontage and not encroach on their abutters' frontage.
5	Very good survey!
6	This is a VERY HOT TOPIC right now and is only going to become hotter until this topic is settled. I am a firm believer that in a lake or great pond is within the municipal jurisdiction and has any moorings within the water then the municipality should be the one to regulate the issuing of moorings & permits (even if the body of water is less than 10 acres). I feel the municipality should be the primary enforcement agent for these purposes. In the event there is a body of water that is not within a specific municipality then the State should be the permitting and enforcement agent. However, I do feel the State may hire or appoint a Harbor Master to manage multiple bodies of water if they are not within a municipal jurisdiction. The same could be said for a single Harbor Master for 2 or three municipalities. With this being said, the Title 38 and Title 12 languages need to align the same so training standards will stay consistent statewide.
7	Obviously, this comment is rarely voiced. Unlimited public access can create an environment that density creates safety and environmental issues.
8	Due to the subjectivity of the survey, we are including additional comments on select questions for consideration. Q1. The primary concern is not with private use itself, but with ensuring that such uses do not interfere with public rights or create inequities. Because private moorings occupy portions of a public resource, municipalities and the state should have authority to regulate their placement, establish reasonable limits where necessary, and recover appropriate user fees to help offset management costs. We also caution against allowing the discussion to expand into broader property tax issues. Any distinction between public and private use could have unintended implications for municipal assessment practices and ta policy. Q2. Considering these are public resources, private moorings should be used so long as the state/municipalities can place limits and collect user fees that are higher than the norm to offset management costs and to reflect the fact that a public resource is being used for private purposes. Q4. The preferred approach to setting appropriate limits is a shared framework in which the state establishes minimum standards while municipalities retain discretion to address local circumstances. Lakes, ponds, rivers, and coastal waters vary significantly in size, use patterns, environmental conditions, and development pressures. Consequently, regulations that work well in one community may be ineffective or unnecessary in another.

	Q5. It is important that municipalities can opt in or out of enforcement. Q6. Municipalities should have broad flexibility to tailor requirements to local conditions. Communities that choose to adopt regulations beyond statewide minimum standards should possess the administrative capacity, staffing, and enforcement infrastructure necessary to implement those requirements. Q8. The needed predictability would be subjected to changes in legislative priorities. There should be an effort to strive for more predictability and consistency in rules, regulations and standards. Consistency should be achieved through common principles and minimum standards rather than identical local regulations. Q10. The criteria used to assess the “correct” number should be transparent, consistently applied, equitable, and periodically reviewed to ensure they continue to achieve their intended purpose. Q12. Prioritizing limited mooring space is a tough question to answer. One approach may be for the working group to agree on an outcome, which may make the policy priorities clear. Regardless of approach, there needs to be a balance among private, public, and natural resources interests, as well as the needs unique to the waterbody. Q13. We don’t have a concrete answer to this one. Setting limits based on the mooring impact to the waterbody seems to make more sense than based on the amount of shoreline frontage. Using shoreline frontage measures may not adequately account for navigation, environmental protection, public access, safety, or the unique characteristics of individual waterbodies. Q15. If permits are required, it should be a shared responsibility between the state and municipalities depending on the type of mooring. Q16. Permits should differ depending on the type or purpose of the mooring, provided differing standards are needed and justified. Q17. Public parking lots work because they consolidate traffic into an area where it makes the most sense. This concept could be applied to mooring fields in that they could be located in places that make the most sense for the waterbody and interested parties. Q18. In terms of anchoring a vessel, there are differences between ordinary recreational use and extended occupation of public waters. Regulation may be appropriate in limited, clearly defined circumstances, but any standards should be objective and easily understood to avoid unnecessary disputes and inconsistent enforcement. Q21. Several survey questions present complex policy issues in ways that may not fully capture municipal perspectives. We would be happy to engage our legislative policy committee directly so that municipal officials can provide practical insights based on their experience administering local ordinances, managing waterfront resources, and responding to constituent concerns. Overall, our responses support a balanced policy framework that preserves the public trust in Maine’s waters while recognizing legitimate private uses, emphasizes local flexibility within statewide minimum standards, relies on objective and outcome-based regulations, and encourages collaboration between state and municipal governments
9	Any requirement placed upon the municipalities needs to be weighed carefully, bearing in mind that not all municipalities face the same challenges or have the same capacity (or interest) as the few represented in this working group, and that the LUPC must step in to fill that municipal requirement across the entire unorganized territories. Additionally, the state and counties are limited in capacity relative to their jurisdiction. Regulatory outcomes should focus on empowering municipalities to protect and effectively manage their lakes according to local needs without putting undue burden on them or the state. State-level regulations should be widely applicable across diverse site conditions based on predictable and concrete factors that can be found statewide (e.g., level of existing development density is a poor metric that changes over time and does not take planning goals into account; town lines and shoreline measurements don't usually change). Lastly, don't forget that multi-

	jurisdictional waterbodies add a significant layer of complexity to lake-specific approaches like limiting the overall number of moorings on a waterbody.
10	Q1: It's not just about the public rights (third answer) but also about protecting the resource (water quality, wildlife habitat) Q5: Concerned about the ability of the state to enforce mooring regs. so think that responsibility must be shared to be effective. Q11 (limits to number of moorings): Not sure if "existing development" means MORE moorings where there are more people or FEWER?? Or more moorings in undeveloped areas?? Lots of nuance here! Also not sure if "shoreline frontage" is related to a landowner or to the lake itself? Q12 (priorities): This is also nuanced...I support property owners mooring having priority to place a mooring in front of their property but not having priority to place a mooring in general on that specific lake. For commercial entities, I put them as moderate in terms of priority but that's because I don't want them to have high priority that excludes others users or damages resources. Q about anchoring: Is there value in looking at anchor types?? Permitting anchoring in general seems impractical...no way it could be enforced (by state or municipalities). Other notes in general: I mentioned this in a couple places...presence of nearby invasive species should be considered in locating moorings. Also depth of water where motor boating can disrupt littoral habitat. Finally, a big dilemma...if towns are enforcing wouldn't they need a boat and/or harbormaster? Not sure how those logistics work (maybe state issues permits but asks for help from IFW for enforcement? Is this a model that would work?)
11	A one-size-fits-all mooring law is unlikely to work well. Mooring rules have to balance a lot of competing realities, including: • Physical conditions ◦ size of the lake or river, ◦ water depth ◦ bottom type and holding conditions ◦ exposure to wind and wakes. • Navigation and safety ◦ Clear channels ◦ spacing between moorings ◦ distance from shore (too close/too far ◦ emergency access ◦ avoiding conflicts with swimmers • Property and access issues ◦ waterfront/back-lot access ◦ public access rights ◦ congestion in densely populated areas • Environmental concerns ◦ habitat protection ◦ fish and fowl ◦ erosion and sediment disturbance Many places end up using general statewide standards plus local tailoring instead of rigid universal rules. A practical framework should be something like: 1 Baseline safety and environmental standards ◦ minimum marking requirements ◦ equipment standards ◦ navigation

	◦ habitat protection rules 2 Site-specific local review ◦ depth and bottom conditions ◦ shoreline density ◦ special hazards ◦ local traffic patterns 3 Clear permitting criteria ◦ applicants know what factors matter ◦ neighbors and boaters understand the rules 4 Flexibility with limits ◦ room for exceptions where justified ◦ but not so much discretion that enforcement becomes inconsistent Uniform principles can work, but uniform placement will fail.
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